

# imagine

a democratic alternative to the monarchy

New Look!

## Value-for-money or Royal rip-off? ⑤

Join the debate on a future republic ②

Republic goes to conference ③

Can the Queen defend the faith? ④

Downing Street vigils ⑧

Republic

The Campaign for an  
Elected Head of State



# The Way Forward

## Join the debate on a British republic



■ Do the Australians have the answer?

A few years ago Republic developed a policy on the shape of a future republic. As the campaign grows and Republic gains more members it is important to open that policy up to debate and review.

*The Way Forward*, which will be a regular section in *Imagine*, will provide an opportunity for members to comment on current policy and suggest changes and new ideas.

This edition deals with the proposed model of a future British republic which is included in Republic's policy statement.

♦♦♦

Republic currently says that, "The President will be directly elected. The precise powers of the elected Head of State will be debated by the Constitutional Convention and ultimately decided by referendum. Republic suggests that, besides a ceremonial role, these be limited to reserve constitutional powers. There will be provision for an impeachment procedure. The position of Prime Minister, as Head of Government, will remain."

This Irish-style model is based on two ideas; a) that we should call for minimal change and b) that the British people would not wish to have a US style presidency.

However, there could be other options for Republic to pursue. We could state that we simply want a republic and do not mind what sort.

Alternatively we could learn from the Australian campaign. The Australian Republican Movement has detailed a number of alternative models. They argue that any future referendum should be preceded by a number of

non-binding plebiscites. The first plebiscite should ask a question of principle, should Australia become a republic with an Australian Head of State or should we remain as a monarchy with the Queen as Head of State? This would be followed by a second plebiscite involving a preferential vote on a range of models. This way the final choice is left in the hands of the voting public

♦♦♦

What do you think? Should Republic retain its current preference for an Irish-style ceremonial presidency? Should we opt for an executive Head of State, or follow the Australian example and provide the voter with a choice or should we not have a Head of State at all? Perhaps there are other options not mentioned here.

Let us know your views. Simply email [imagine@republic.org.uk](mailto:imagine@republic.org.uk) or write to 'The Way Forward', Republic, PO Box 34851, London, W8 5YA.

Republic is a democratic organisation and we are keen to give plenty of opportunity to members to get involved and participate in the debate. It is important that the cause we fight for is a cause we all believe in. ■

## Letters

■ The Royal Family has spent centuries building wealth and influence. They have much influential and powerful support. We republicans on the other hand even have trouble getting our message aired in the mainstream media, even though, for example, our bottom line support is of the order of 25% according to polling. This is most certainly not reflected pro rata in BBC's news coverage. Notwithstanding this, we all have to pay the licence fee.

We have seen just how valuable financial support can be through the example of the legacy recently left to Republic and how much good work can be done to further our cause. My wife and I are at present reviewing our will arrangements and will be writing new wills before the end of the year. These will include gifts to Republic.

This is so that our work can continue to be as effective as possible for as long as it needs to be done. I can think of no better way of ensuring our principled stand in favour of democracy can be expressed than to raise two fingers from beyond the grave to the concept of inherited power and privilege. I urge all members of Republic to do likewise to whatever extent their circumstances permit.

Joe Coten  
London

■

See [www.republic.org.uk/legacy.htm](http://www.republic.org.uk/legacy.htm) for information about leaving money to Republic.

We'd like to hear from you. Are you organising any local activities or do you have some views on the campaign or the issues that you'd like to share? Send your letters to [imagine@republic.org.uk](mailto:imagine@republic.org.uk) or to *Imagine*, PO Box 34851, London, W8 5YA.

## AGM 2005

This year's Annual General Meeting is to be held on Saturday, October 29th at the Westminster University in London. As well as a panel of interesting speakers there will be presentations from leading members of the campaign team and committee. Details will be sent to all members nearer the time.

Please remember that to attend the AGM your membership must be up-to-date. If you wish to check on the status of your membership, or renew for another 12 months, please call us on 08708 508 825 or email [enquiries@republic.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@republic.org.uk). ■

### Republic

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# Republic to exhibit at conferences

Party members and trade unionists attending the Labour, Liberal Democrat or TUC conferences this September will have a chance to find out more about Republic and our campaign for an elected head of state.

Republic will be exhibiting at each of the conferences, displaying information, handing out promotional material and talking to conference-goers.

"This is a first for Republic," Executive Chair John Campbell explained, "all our research, plus a little common sense, suggest that these organisations represent our core audience. We're keen to use this opportunity to build on Republic's recent growth and success in getting media attention. We are seeking to gain greater recognition in the political community."

As well as being visible to delegates and party members Republic will also use the opportunity to speak to MPs and union leaders.

Although it is just the three conferences this year, if the exhibitions are a success they will be taken to other party conferences in



■ Brighton: Conference venue

the future. Graham Smith, Campaign Coordinator outlined the thinking behind the conference plan, "We are currently focussed on targeting our core support, telling people who already agree with us that we are here and are campaigning hard to win support for a republic. As we build up our resources and strength we will begin to shift our attention toward less obvious audiences, including the Conservative party."

Republic is also hoping the conferences, being held in Brighton and Blackpool, will be a chance to boost local group activity in those areas. The Sussex group has already met and discussed how they can help at the conference. ■

# Volunteer Opportunities

## • Scotland organisers

Republic needs committed volunteers to help build a strong support network in Scotland.

## • Writers for the *Imagine* team.

Join our team of writers for *Imagine*. We are also looking for volunteers with editing and production skills.

## • Events organisers.

Do you have experience organising public events?

## • Designers, artists and models.

We want to improve our range and marketing of our merchandise. As well as designers we need people who can model our products.

For details email Graham Smith at [g.smith@republic.org.uk](mailto:g.smith@republic.org.uk) or call 08708 508 825. ■

# It's for you

As part of the continuing strategy to improve the image and accessibility of Republic we now have a new national phone number; 08708 508 825. If you have queries, need to renew your membership or would just like to find out more about Republic why not give us a call. ■

# A brand new welcome for new members

Republic has launched a new Welcome Pack for new members. The pack, which will also be sent to all members who renew during the next twelve months, will include a



■ Welcome Pack

Republic pin badge, a window sticker, a membership card and useful information about the campaign and the organisation. Members will be able to keep all this together in a smart new presentation folder that comes as part of the new pack. ■

# Increase Circulation of *Imagine* & WIN WIN WIN!

We are keen to get copies of *Imagine* into shops, clubs, offices, community centres, libraries and venues across the country. To do this we need your help. Send us contact details of venues and shops who are prepared to stock copies of this free magazine. We'll do the rest, contacting the venue owners and arranging delivery of copies direct from Republic.

## WIN PRIZES!

Each supporter who sends us details of potential stockists will be entered into a prize draw.\* Three winners will be drawn, winning £50, £30 or £20 worth of merchandise from our Gifts and Merchandise shop.

Send all details to: Graham Smith, Republic, PO Box 34851, London, W8 5YA, call 08708 508 825 or email [imagine@republic.org.uk](mailto:imagine@republic.org.uk)

\* The details sent in must result in at least one agreement to stock *Imagine*. Members of the Republic Executive Committee and employees of Republic are not eligible to win prizes. Prize draws will be held every three months.



# Defender of the Faith?

■ EDMUND MONTGOMERY

As the Queen on the advice of the Prime Minister appoints a new Archbishop of York questions must be asked about the relationship between the State and its Church

One of the many titles to which the monarch lays claim is that of Defender of the Faith. This title, originally and perhaps ironically, was granted by the Pope to Henry VIII for his defence of the Roman Catholic Church against the teachings of Martin Luther. After the Reformation the newly established Church of England under the authority of the Crown, reaffirmed the title for the Defence of the Protestant faith.

From its establishment the Church of England has held a special position in the government of Britain. Bishops of the Church of England sit in the House of Lords, laws of the Church of England are enacted by Parliament, the monarch is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England, Bishops are appointed by the monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister and the monarch must be a member of the Church of England to have a valid claim to the throne.

This privileged position of the Church of England is one of the greatest arguments for a complete overhaul of the constitution, the disestablishment of the Church and the abolition of the monarchy. The established Church is an anachronism in a modern democracy. It entrenches religious discrimination and damages the standing of both Church and State.

Under the Constitution of the United States, Church and State must be separate. The First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees free speech and thereby the State may not impose religious doctrine nor promote public displays of piety with the force of law. The Founding Fathers, mindful of the religious persecution witnessed in Europe were eager to prevent such acts happening in the new world and new society they were building.

The separation of Church and State in the United States has arguably lead to a stronger Church and a more



■ Questions must be asked about the relationship between State and Church

impartial State than in Britain where State and Church are fused. The argument for disestablishing the Church is not an argument against the Church of England, the Protestant faith or Christianity. It is a contention that no religion should hold a privileged place in a pluralist society, that the Christian heritage of the British Isles is one to be cherished, respected and preserved but not by the force of law.

Where religious doctrine is given the force of law, the State becomes a theocracy based not upon the free choice of the people to elect those

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**the Church may be compromised in the values and message it proclaims by its relationship with the political establishment.**

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who govern for all the people, but a quasi-religious entity using the law to advance the faith. It is absurd to believe that religion or faith needs the force of law to protect or advance it. Religion is a matter of personal conscience, a relationship between God and the believer, not God the State and the believer. The State is not necessary for the preservation of religion nor is religion necessary for the preservation of the State. They can both survive and indeed flourish independently of each other

The danger of the presence of an established Church is that the Church may be compromised in the values and message it proclaims by its relationship with the political establishment. A disestablished Church is an independent Church.

The Supreme Governor of the Church of England is the reigning monarch. The monarch must be a member of the Church of England under the Act of Settlement 1700, a

law passed to ensure the Protestant succession to the British Crown. This act ensures that the Head of State, the person who by virtue of their position ought to represent Britain to the world as well as to the people, may only ever be of one faith, one family and one class. This is the absurdity of the monarchy: that birth, blood and religion give the right to rule.

The fusion of Church and State is dangerous for both. For the Church that is seen as compromising on its beliefs in deference to government policy. For the State that is seen as favouring one religion contrary to the cornerstone of liberal democratic belief, that of freedom of choice.

The presence of an established Church and an unelected Head of State is an affront to democracy. No religion should be favoured above another; no family should be favoured above another. In the same way we choose the faith we believe in we should choose the people who govern us. All faiths or none are entitled to protection from the State; all families or none are entitled to position by birth.

The monarchy and the established Church are the cornerstones of an antiquated discriminatory and elitist system of government. They are contrary to the democratic principles of pluralism, equality and freedom. A British Republic and a disestablished Church of England are the only answers to this constitutional anachronism; a society where the people and the faiths they hold are equal before the law. ■

*Opinions expressed in articles are not necessarily the view or policy of Republic, its staff or its Executive Committee.*

# Value-for-money or Royal rip-off?

**"We believe this represents a value for money monarchy. We're not looking to provide the cheapest monarchy. We're looking at one of good value and good quality,"** said Alan Reid, so called Keeper of the Privy Purse and defender of royal extravagance. That was in June this year, following the latest annual report on royal finances released by Buckingham Palace.

They certainly aren't looking for the cheapest monarchy, with an overseas trip on a chartered plane costing £300,000 and a single train journey from Aberdeen to Plymouth costing a staggering £45,000. These were just some of the details of the reports that Republic has been keen to point out. Professor Stephen Haseler, Honorary Chair of Republic, asked the media recently, "How can Mr Reid possibly claim that we have a 'value-for-money monarchy' when Prince Charles spends £45,000 on a single train journey?" Republic pointed out that the journey, from Aberdeen to Plymouth, would cost any ordinary passenger just £69 return or £34.50 one-way. Even a First-Class return is only £320, 140 times cheaper than the Prince's ticket.

But isn't it odd that what is supposed to be an ancient and respected institution is now resorting to the language of a used-car salesman to justify itself? Roy Hattersley made this astute observation in his Guardian column, in which he suggested that, if this is the only argument they can find to defend the monarchy, "we are entitled to ask how many miles there are on the Queen's clock and if she is still in full working order."

For something to be 'value-for-money' there must surely be a return on the investment. As always the

palace has attempted to argue that we should all be grateful for the tourism the monarchy attracts and the never-ending charity-work the Windsors dedicate their lives to. And, as always, the palace ignored the fact that to date there has been no evidence produced that shows the monarchy attracts tourists that wouldn't come anyway. The buildings and soldiers changing the guard would still be there in a republic and many other republics, such as France and the US, attract many more

## Economical with the truth?

tourists than the UK. They also neglected to acknowledge that Prince Charles' charity work, while commendable, does not require him and his family to have an exclusive right to occupy the highest position in our constitution. Cannot Charles Windsor, private citizen in a British republic, do just as much for charity as Prince Charles, heir to the throne?

It was with these points in mind that Republic challenged the very notion that we should be giving any money to the monarchy. Stephen Haseler asked the simple question, "Why do we give millions of pounds each year to a family that is personally very wealthy?" In reference to the enormous tax breaks enjoyed by the

royals Graham Smith, Republic's Campaign Coordinator, told the BBC News website, "The whole monarchy should be abolished, but while they remain they should be paying the same tax as everyone else". With personal incomes exceeding £10m each, Republic questions the need to pay them anything at all out of the

## Republic to research finances

public purse, except perhaps a token salary for public duties performed on behalf of the government.

It is believed however that even with these annual reports the British public is not being given a full and honest account of the cost of the monarchy. This is why Republic will be launching a research project, headed by Professor Haseler and involving *Who Owns Britain* author Kevin Cahill, which will attempt to fully quantify the costs of the monarchy.

Graham Smith explained recently, "Our objection to the monarchy is of course based on the principle of democracy, regardless of any financial balance sheet: it is an undemocratic institution that belongs in the 12th century, not the 21st. However, the Duchies' reluctance to have their accounts examined by the National Audit Office, and the omission of any figures regarding costs met by the police and MoD, suggest the one thing the royals are being economical with is the truth." ■

### Family Fortunes: taxpayers loss

- £45,000 on a single train journey for Prince Charles (*equivalent to 3 more nurses*)
- £20m on tax breaks for the Duchy of Cornwall (*or 900 more police officers*)
- £20.5m in Grants-in-Aid [for property maintenance and travel] (*or 1100 more teachers*)

- £6.5m spent on decorating Clarence House, the London home of Charles (*or 460 more Health Care Assistants*)

- ♦ In 2004/5 Prince Charles made a private income of £13,274,000, up 11% from the previous year.
- ♦ In 2004/5 the Queen made a personal fortune of £9,000,000 from the Duchy of Lancaster alone.

# Full time Campaign Coordinator appointed

In May of this year Republic appointed a full time Campaign Coordinator for the first time.

"This is an excellent step forward for Republic," said Committee Chair John Campbell. "Republic is now moving quickly to establish itself as a strong organisation with a 24/7 campaign strategy."

Campaign Coordinator Graham Smith, who previously held the role in

a volunteer capacity, commented, "This is a great opportunity for Republic. I am 100 per cent committed to raising the profile and strength of Republic as an organisation. We are already seeing signs of progress which we can build on over the coming months."

Having a full time coordinator means Republic can better respond to news stories and better develop

our membership, local groups and organisation. Signs are that the move is already producing results, with a new enquiries number being set up and greater attention from the national media. ■



■ Graham Smith

# A Personal View

■ BURT KEIMACH

Once when I was at a reception at St James's Palace, someone with a loud voice was heard to ask, "Hey who's that tiny woman in the blue frock talking to Burt?"

I don't know to this day if the Queen overheard the humorous question, and I'm certainly not going to comment on her stature nor on her choice of garment. But it struck me afterwards that her size bears no relation to the psychological mutual dependence of the Great British Public on royal prerogative, the divine right of rulers, the pinnacle of the aristocracy, and the focus of our official loyalty.

Recently a friend of mine decided to exercise his right to become a British citizen, but was having a great deal of difficulty coming to terms with the need to swear allegiance to the person of the ruling monarch. "Shouldn't we be pledging our energies to the nation, or the people?" he naively asked. Sadly on that occasion I had no wish to wander down the winding and complicated road of history in order to answer him. (In the end, practicality prevailed, and he bit the bullet.) But perhaps now the time is right and proper, since so many are beginning to wonder just why a so-called mature democracy has this institution and just why there is so much baying and whimpering when its relevance is called into question.

You don't have to be an expert in the history of these islands to understand its evolution from the Norman leaders who seized the place in the 11th century. As the saying goes, "Even God can't change history." But monarchy's baffling persistence in this age of meritocracy and steadily developing open government presents a serious conundrum for psychiatrists trying to analyse otherwise reasonable people.

Mention doing away with the institution, and immediately the cons range themselves in a battle line against the pros who stick their noses in the air and think of bushy tailed foxes. This nation is simply incapable of being dispassionate when examining the whole issue.

For starters just look at the institution and the dysfunctional,

## PROFILE

William Summers  
Local Campaigns  
Officer

■ William became involved with Republic in 2004 and has been instrumental in assisting new group coordinators with setting up groups and getting in touch with other local members.

William is 28 and presently lives in London, though he is originally from the north Norfolk coast. "I've always been a republican, but until I discovered Republic's existence I didn't have a sufficient outlet for my feelings - except for the regular 'discussions' with friends and family on the issue, that is!"

William is also involved in party politics and spends any free time he has playing the guitar, though he claims to still need "plenty more practice".

*Profile is a new feature of Imagine. We will be profiling Republic volunteers and supporters from up and down the country.*



excessively glorified, obscenely over-privileged family currently holding the reins.

Can anyone explain to me what this has to do with democracy? Everyone keeps screaming in my ear: "OK, so what do you replace it with?" My answer to that would be -- anything, as long as it's the choice of all the people properly and reasonably informed after a campaign! Of course our problem is that the brainwashed, and brain dead would vote overwhelmingly for the royals. If you think that's not so, just look at Australia and New Zealand. Apparently they still want to hold on to another country's symbols, perhaps not yet ready to create their own. And in Canada, in spite of the Quebecois position, the Queen and her consort still got the red carpet a few weeks ago.

So let's try another tack. It costs £37 million pounds a year to run this family. An elected head of state would set us back just a few hundred thousand. Maybe in total up to a mere one million adding expenses for security, transport, and pension plan. (Pension plans are earned, not inherited. If you think that shouldn't be the case for some, just listen to recent news stories.)

OK, so if that doesn't sway the

voters, how about this Royal Prerogative? It allows wars without consulting Parliament. The Falklands is the most infamous case. I'm not speaking about the *casus belli* but of the way the nation was dragged into it.

Well, still not convinced? What about all this secrecy being unveiled by the Freedom of Information Act? Based on history, this is undoubtedly deeply offensive to our "betters" but they were finally backed up against the wall. The Act is a step in the right direction, even though it's a mewing paper tiger compared to similar Acts in other democracies.

The House of Lords! There they go again - the pros and the cons, glistening teeth and Champagne buckets at the ready.

Good idea upper chamber. If you're in it because your ancestors managed to grab a few thousand acres of this green and pleasant land after prolonged bowing and scraping to some past monarch. "But it's not fair!" someone screams. "Elect them. Elect them," yet another cries out before a cucumber sandwich is stuffed in his face.

Here's another one for you. Just why is the Queen the head of the Church? Well, historically....ho hum, boring! But maybe, he naively wondered, it's so hard to get rid of the monarchy precisely because of that reason. We'd be messing with religion. That's must be it. The monarchy is part of the uniquely British form of religion. So abolishing it would be like, don't say it - like attacking God!

Hey, this discussion is getting a little too deep here. If Britain were a Republic....if, if, and if, again. If a frog had wings then he wouldn't bump his rear on the ground! But wait a minute. A Republic would not be an impossible twist of nature. There would be no stupendous feat of genetic engineering involved. We would just have to write a Constitution, something we've always neglected to do, and *voila* (that's a good word from a republic!)

A blue frock? Maybe it was green. I was so truly dazzled in the presence. ■

*If you would like to contribute to Imagine email [imagine@republic.org.uk](mailto:imagine@republic.org.uk) or call Graham Smith on 08708 508 825 and ask for a copy of the Writer's Guidelines.*



## Party Branch Motions

At the end of July the Walthamstow constituency Labour party adopted a motion to support the republic campaign. Labour party and Republic member, Scott Reeve, told *Imagine* that he is keen to encourage other branches of the Labour party, and other parties, to do the same. As a Labour member Scott has said he would like to get in touch with other members and launch a 'Labour Republic' group.

If any Republic supporters are interested in starting a party based group, whether it be in the Labour party, Lib Dems, Tories or Greens, please get in touch with Graham Smith, on 08708 508 825 or by emailing [g.smith@republic.org.uk](mailto:g.smith@republic.org.uk). ■

## Charter 88 asks Republic members to support war Bill

Charter 88 have enlisted the support of Clare Short MP to sponsor their Armed Forces (Parliamentary Approval for Participation in Armed Conflict) Bill. The Bill would require parliamentary approval for the use of the country's armed forces, by making the Government obtain Parliament's authority to go to war.

As the current power to go to war is a royal prerogative, handed to the PM by the Queen, Charter 88 have asked Republic members to support their bill by writing to their MPs to press them to vote in favour of the proposed changes.

Republic organiser Graham Smith explained, "Republic of course only has a view on the one issue of the monarchy, and although we are happy to tell our supporters about this Charter 88 initiative we do not have a view on the specific issues surrounding recent wars and conflicts. We are telling our supporters about this bill simply because it helps highlight the nature of royal power."

Republic supporters can find out more about the Charter 88 campaign by visiting their website at [www.charter88.org.uk](http://www.charter88.org.uk).

# Gifts and Merchandise

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[www.republic.org.uk/shop](http://www.republic.org.uk/shop)

All Republic gifts and merchandise are available via our website shop. Prices and product range may vary.  
\* Shop facility and payment software for gifts and merchandise are powered by [www.spreadshirt.co.uk](http://www.spreadshirt.co.uk)



# Local Campaigning

## London members to stage Downing Street vigils

Local campaigners in London are to begin staging regular vigils outside Downing Street. The aim is to generate interest in the campaign and to motivate supporters to take action.

Nina Coten, one of the organisers of the vigils explained what would be happening, "It's basically like a demo, we will come together opposite Downing Street, display banners and speak to passers-by. We hope that eventually we can build this up into a larger event."

Graham Smith hopes the vigils will help give momentum to the London groups. "Of course we plan to organise national events in London. It is the capital and the home of the monarchy. So we are keen to promote the idea of publicly campaigning on the streets."

The vigils are not being seen as protests, but rather as publicity stunts designed to gain interest over time. William Summers, Local Campaigns Coordinator explained, "This is very much a local initiative, but if successful the national campaign can begin to lend more support and organise supporters to join the London groups in Whitehall."

If you are keen to support the cause by joining the vigils please get in touch with Nina Coten, who can be contacted on 07985 903 152 or by emailing [ninacoten@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:ninacoten@hotmail.co.uk). ■



■ Vigils will be opposite Downing St.

## Cambridge group launches website

A second local group has launched its own website in recent weeks, signalling the growing strength of Republic's local groups network.

Local Campaigns Officer William Summers was full of praise for the group, "This is good news, a strong web presence is important and local websites help put people in touch with our grassroots."

Cambridge organiser Matthew Angus explained, "The group has been going for several months now, I felt it was important to have a website to make it easier to tell local people what the group is up to."

The website can be found at [www.cambridgerepublic.org](http://www.cambridgerepublic.org). ■

## Support the Scottish Campaign

Support for a republic in Scotland has historically been much higher than in the rest of the UK. Yet, despite this the Republic movement does not have a formal support group north of the border.

Republic is seeking to put this right, by actively working to build a Scottish coordinating team and by providing assistance and support to help that team establish a strong support base.

"We have begun to make contact with some strong supporters in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and we intend to build on that in the coming months," Local Campaigns Officer, William Summers said. "Scotland is a high priority simply because for a natural heartland of republicans we are seriously under-represented. I

would call on anyone living in Scotland to get in touch and offer your support."

"Republic welcomes nationalists and unionists alike, as we have no opinion on the independence of Scotland," explained John Campbell, Executive Chair of Republic. "Whether Scotland remains a part of the union with the rest of Britain, or becomes an independent nation, we believe it should have a democratically elected Head of State, not a monarchy."

Recent opinion polls have put republican support in Scotland as high as 49%, a great result after little active campaigning on the issue. An active campaign in Scotland could make a huge difference to the national campaign. ■

## Free Groups Guide

Get your free guide to running a local group. Contact William Summers on 07870 928 789 or email him at [w.summers@republic.org.uk](mailto:w.summers@republic.org.uk)

[www.republic.org.uk/groups](http://www.republic.org.uk/groups)